

4 groups.

1 **20.** The schedule management system according to claim 11, wherein said
2 schedule server further comprises a data access unit which accesses selected databases in
3 accordance with instructions for retrieving the idle time common from said plurality of
4 groups.--

REMARKS

Claims 10-20 are pending in this application. Claims 6 and 8-9 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in favor of expedite allowance of the instant application while claims 15-20 have been newly added to depend upon now allowed claims 10-11 in order to place all claims in condition for allowance.

Claims 12-14 have been allowed without the necessity of amendment. Claims 10-11 have been indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claim 6. The Examiner's indication of allowability of these claims is noted with appreciation. For purposes of expedition, claims 10-11 have been rewritten to include all of the limitations of their respective base claim 6 for allowance. In addition, claims 15-20 have been added to depend upon those newly allowed independent claims 10-11 in order to further define Applicants' disclosed invention over the prior art of record.

Claims 6, 8 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hotaling et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,124,912 for reasons stated on pages 3-4 of the Office

action. While Applicants disagree with the Examiner's assessment of the cited portion of Hotaling '912, claims 6, 8 and 9 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in favor of allowance of the instant application. The canceled claims 6, 8 and 9 have been presented concurrently herewith in a continuation application under Rule 53(b) with novel features such as the ability of "remote client devices" to "continuously request the idle time retrieval for a special group with a new retrieval condition, which is a previous idle time retrieval result" which are not described anywhere in Hotaling '912 or any other cited references.

In view of the foregoing additions and remarks, all claims are deemed in condition for examination. Should any questions remain unresolved, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' attorney at (703) 312-6600.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. A fee of \$80.00 has been previously paid for the conversion of claims 10-11 into independent forms and cancellation of claims 6, 8 and 9 which result in the addition of one independent claim in excess of three (3). Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (500.35669CX1).

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

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Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please **cancel** claims 6, and 8-9 without prejudice or disclaimer, **amend** claims 10-11, and **add** claims 15-20, as follows:

1 **10. (Amended)** [**The**] A schedule management system, [according to Claim 6]

2 comprising:

3 a schedule server which stores schedules of participants and schedules of equipments
4 reserved by ones of said participants in different groups; and
5 a plurality of remote client devices operatively connected to said schedule server,
6 which allow client users to input schedules of said participants and request an idle time
7 retrieval from said schedule server, wherein a degree of significance is provided to said
8 participants respectively so that schedules of said participants are grouped in the order of said
9 degree of significance to thereby produce the idle time corresponding to said degree of
10 significance.

1 **11. (Amended)** [**The**] A schedule management system, [according to Claim 6]

2 comprising:

3 a schedule server which stores schedules of participants and schedules of equipments

4 reserved by ones of said participants in different groups; and
5 a plurality of remote client devices operatively connected to said schedule server,
6 which allow client users to input schedules of said participants and request an idle time
7 retrieval from said schedule server, wherein said schedule server comprises databases which
8 store schedules of participants and schedules of equipments reserved by ones of said
9 participants, and a multistageous idle time retrieval unit which divides schedules registered
10 for participants and equipments into a plurality of groups and retrieves an idle time common
11 from one group as a retrieval condition for retrieving an idle time common for another group
12 of said plurality of groups.

1 --15. The schedule management system according to claim 10, wherein said
2 schedule server comprises a communication controller which provides registration for a
3 special group, and wherein said idle time is retrieved so that at least one of participants and
4 equipments in said special group satisfies a retrieval condition for retrieving said idle time.

1 16. The schedule management system according to claim 15, wherein said
2 schedule server further comprises a data access unit which accesses selected databases in
3 accordance with instructions for retrieving the idle time common from said plurality of
4 groups.

1 17. The schedule management system according to claim 10, wherein said
2 schedule server comprises a data access unit which accesses selected databases in accordance

3 with instructions for retrieving the idle time common from said plurality of groups.

1 **18.** The schedule management system according to claim 11, wherein said
2 schedule server further comprises a communication controller which provides registration for
3 a special group, and wherein said idle time is retrieved so that at least one of participants and
4 equipments in said special group satisfies a retrieval condition for retrieving said idle time.

1 **19.** The schedule management system according to claim 18, wherein said
2 schedule server further comprises a data access unit which accesses selected databases in
3 accordance with instructions for retrieving the idle time common from said plurality of
4 groups.

1 **20.** The schedule management system according to claim 11, wherein said
2 schedule server further comprises a data access unit which accesses selected databases in
3 accordance with instructions for retrieving the idle time common from said plurality of
4 groups.--